

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT**



Application No. 12923, of the Army and Navy Club, pursuant to Paragraph 8207.11 of the Zoning Regulations, for variances from the open court requirements (Sub-section 5305.1) and from the rear yard requirements (Sub-section 5303.1) to allow the construction of additions to the side of and above the existing building to be used for retail, office and private club purposes in the C-4 District at the premises 1627 "I" Street, N.W. (Square 185, Lot 803).

HEARING DATE: May 23, 1979  
DECISION DATE: July 11, 1979

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject property is located on Farragut Square at the northeast corner of the intersection of 17th and I Streets, N.W. It is known as 1627 "I" Street, N.W., and is in a C-4 District.
2. Farragut Square is surrounded on four sides by office buildings of modern designs with the exception of the Barr Building. The street floors of the office buildings are occupied by retail stores or banks. Two subway stations are within one block of the subject property. The area is within the central business district.
3. The applicant, the Army and Navy Club, is a private club which was incorporated in 1885. It is a non-profit organization operated for the benefit of its members who are individuals who have served or are serving as commissioned officers in one of the uniformed services of the United States.
4. The original building was completed in 1912. The building was originally seven stories high, but various alterations or additions were made, the most recent of which were a two-bay alley addition on the 17th Street side and a modernistic penthouse added at the eighth floor level in 1958. The building interior layout and use presently consists chiefly of lounges, conference rooms, library, club-offices, sleeping rooms for members, dining rooms and related service rooms. The subject site is 15,705 square feet in area.

5. By decision dated June 27, 1974, the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital designated the Clubhouse as a Historic Landmark, and placed the building in Category III of the Inventory of Historic Sites. The Joint Committee noted in its decision that the building's design is oriented toward Farragut Square and that the Club had been a part of the continuing history of the Farragut Square area since 1891. The Joint Committee did not recommend the building for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places because of the above-referenced penthouse and alley additions.

6. Over the years the building had suffered serious deterioration, both physically and operationally. The applicant testified that the maintenance of the building in proper condition is becoming more and more costly and beyond the fiscal capabilities of the applicant under present circumstances. The building mechanical systems and facilities are grossly inadequate. There is no central air-conditioning system, and the plumbing and wiring systems are in need of renewal. Compounding the maintenance problems are the burdens to efficiency of operation which the building's layout has imposed as the applicant's club activities have expanded. Consultants have advised the applicant that the building's functional layout precluded any material improvements in operating efficiency to meet the ever increasing costs of maintaining the building.

7. In June of 1977, the applicant's membership voted to retain the present structure, with its ambiance and historic significance, but only if such preservation could be accomplished on an economically feasible basis. The only alternative was and remains demolition of the building and replacement with a modern structure developed to the land's highest and best use.

8. In order to make preservation feasible, it would be necessary to achieve a higher utilization of the underlying ground by expanding the building into the existing courtyard and the private alley on the I Street side, and by extending the new construction to the full height permitted by the Zoning Regulations. It is proposed that the existing modernistic penthouse at the eighth floor level be removed, and that an architecturally harmonious crown of four floors be added. The new construction will result in a gross building area of 152,297.66 square feet (9.70 F.A.R.). Upon completion of construction, the applicant will consolidate its present club activities into approximately 65,000 square feet of space, leaving approximately 6,500 square feet available for rent as retail use and approximately 75,500 square feet available for rent as office use.

9. The proposed construction in the private alley on the I Street side of the building has been recessed in order to preserve the architectural integrity of the existing I Street facade. Such a treatment is for design purposes only and it is not the applicant's objective to create a court of any kind. The applicant could have elected to build to the property line. The creation of the open court requires a variance of 14.21 feet.

10. As to the requested rear yard variance, the existing building is built to the north line which abuts the ground on which the office building known as 1666 K Street, N.W. is constructed. The proposed design is to continue the eighth and ninth floors to the rear lot line. A sloped setback would commence at the tenth floor level. The setback established for the I Street and 17th Street facades would simply continue on the north side of the building resulting in the sloped setback. The applicant testified that such a design is absolutely essential to preserving the architectural integrity and proportions of the building. Moreover, practical difficulties would otherwise be encountered since the existing vertical cores and facilities must serve the new floors. The applicant requires a rear yard variance of 27.08 feet to accomplish its purposes.

11. The Board notes that the subject property abuts to the north the ground on which the office building known as 1666 K Street, N.W. is located, and that said office building has a sloping facade. The Board finds that the distance between the rear facade of 1666 K Street, N.W. and the rear facade of applicant's existing building extends from eighteen feet to approximately twenty-two feet. The Board further finds that the open space between the two buildings upon completion of the proposed construction will extend from eighteen feet to 40.25 feet.

12. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2C made no recommendation on the application.

13. There was no opposition to the application.

14. The BZA, at its public meeting of June 6, 1979, tentatively determined that the design of the proposed addition was not in harmony with the character of the existing building. It requested that the applicant submit further architectural design studies for an addition that was more in keeping with the design of the existing building.

15. The applicant submitted a revised plan marked as Exhibit 36. In addressing the harmony of the revised plans with the existing building, the Board find as follows:

1. The first two levels of the addition on the eighth and ninth floors will be faced in brick that would follow the profile and match the color and texture of the existing building as closely as possible.
2. The applicant will utilize the same fenestration elements, double hung windows and brick arches, as are in the existing building and will apply them to the new eighth and ninth floor elevations. However, the windows are more closely spaced and there are more of them on the eighth and ninth floors, to provide adequate light to the office areas of these new floors.
3. The applicant will restore the original cornice, which will serve as a material and visual transition between the existing building and the addition.
4. The applicant will treat the top two floors of the addition, the tenth and eleventh, as a subdued background element. They are set back from the eighth and ninth floors by a minimum of six feet to reduce the apparent height of new construction. The skin of these two floors is to be bronze-colored anodized metal and color-matched insulating glass, and is to be articulated very subtly by continuous vertical mullions spaced two feet on center.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Based on the record, the Board concludes that the requested variances from the open court width, and rear yard requirements are area variances, the granting of which requires a showing of a practical difficulty stemming from the property itself.

The Board notes that the preservation of the building by the applicant under present circumstances is not economically feasible, and that the presence of a historic landmark structure dictates the design, size and placement of the proposed building addition, thereby creating an exceptional situation or condition upon the owner of the property.

The Board concludes that the practical difficulty stems from the existence of a historic landmark structure on the site and the added cost and complexity of development imposed in attempting to preserve a structure and integrate into it a building addition. The Board further notes that the applicant is required to seek the requested variance relief as an alternative to demolition of the historic structure.

The area surrounding the subject site is intensely developed C-4 and will not be adversely affected by the proposed building addition. Moreover, the Board concludes that the purpose of the open court width requirements of the Zoning Regulations are not impaired because there is no court function or purpose to be served and the requested variance results only from an architectural treatment designed to preserve the historic facade. Further, as to the rear yard requirements of the Zoning Regulations, the Board concludes that the light and air objectives are satisfied by the existing and proposed open spaces between the subject building and the building to the north.

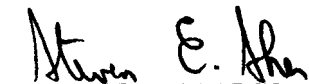
The applicant's proposal furthers the public interest in that it provides for the preservation of a historic structure prominently situated on Farragut Square.

The Board further concludes that the variances can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent purpose and integrity of the zone plan. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that the application is GRANTED SUBJECT to the CONDITION that the BUILDING be constructed in accordance with revised plans marked as EXHIBIT 36.

VOTE: 3-0 (Chloethiel Woodard Smith, John G. Parsons and Leonard L. McCants to GRANT; William F. McIntosh and Charles R. Norris not voting, not having heard the case).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY:



STEVEN E. SHER  
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 5 SEP 1979

UNDER SUB-SECTION 8204.3 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS "NO DECISION OR ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN DAYS AFTER HAVING BECOME FINAL PURSUANT TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT."

THIS ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER, UNLESS WITHIN SUCH PERIOD AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE OR OCCUPANCY IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES, INVESTIGATIONS, AND INSPECTIONS.